

(b) whether it is a fact that soft drink companies in different parts of the country are not controlling their pollutants and chemical discharges and leaving them to percolate groundwater sources;

(c) what action as the CPCB taken to ensure that all soft drink companies avoid polluting groundwater sources; and

(d) how do Government propose to monitor their action, alongwith the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Environment and Forests has notified the effluent standards for soft drink manufacturing industries under the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986. Soft drink manufacturing industries are required to meet the notified standards and also seek consent under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. The State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/ Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) are monitoring the compliance to the notified effluent standards.

(c) and (d) The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has requested all SPCBs/PCCs to monitor the levels of heavy metals in the sludge of effluent treatment plants (ETPs) and ensure its safe disposal in accordance with the provisions under the Hazardous Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 1989 as amended in 2003.

Decline in forest cover

1860. SHRI S.K. KHABIR UDDIN AHMED: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the forest coverage in the country is gradually eroding;

(b) whether it is also a fact that unplanned forestation programmes are leading to loss of ecological balance; and

(c) if so, the preventive steps being taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir. The forest cover of the country is not eroding as per the assessment made by the Forest Survey of India (FSI) using satellite remote sensing technology. The figures

for the forest cover of the country as per the last three biennial assessments published in State of Forest Reports are given below:

| <i>(Area in Km²)</i> | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|
| 1999 | 2001 | 2003 |
| 637,293 | 675,538 | 678,333 |

(b) No such report has been received from States and Union Territories.

(c) Does not arise.

Decrease in forest cover

†1861. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

SHRI KRISHAN LAL BALMIKI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state

(a) whether it is a fact that the forest area is decreasing rapidly in some States of the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that scattered forests have taken place of dense forests' in some of the States causing unfriendly atmosphere for wild animals;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of efforts being made by the Government to expand the forest area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir. The forest area of the country as compiled by Forest Survey of India (FSI) from State Forest Departments and duly published in State of Forest Report (SFR)-2003, does not show any decrease. However, in comparison with the Forest Cover Assessment of 2001, SFR-2003 reveals an overall increase of 2,795 Sq. Km. in forest cover of the country.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.